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❖THE❖OLD❖TESTAMENT❖STUDENT.❖

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A LETTER of President Timothy Dwight of Yale University received too late to be included in the September Symposium on "Bible-study in the College," reads as follows :

It seems to me possible to make the study of the English Bible both profitable and interesting to the young men of our colleges. To this end, however, the instruction should be given by intelligent, large-minded, and inspiring teachers, and should be in the line of showing what the Bible is ; how it came into being ; what it is designed, and what it is not designed, to accomplish ; what the mind of every thoughtful man may find in it ; and where it meets the life of every such man in the experiences and duties of the present age. If it can be studied in this way and with such teachers, there can be no doubt of the value of the study and the teaching.

Yours very truly,

TIMOTHY DWIGHT.

All will agree that, desirable as may be the introduction of the Bible into the college curriculum, the success of the work, when once introduced, will depend largely, if not wholly, upon the character of the man who shall undertake to teach it, and upon the conception which he may have of the work which he has undertaken. Wherever the matter is entrusted to a man who is not a "living teacher," and the proportion of living teachers in the whole number is surprisingly small, or to a man who, although a teacher, has no proper idea of the line to be followed, there will be immediate failure. There is need, therefore, of careful and considerate action, and of wise and cautious choice.

IN a similar line, although with a somewhat different application, President David S. Jordan, of Indiana State University, writes :

"I should be glad to see the study of the Bible introduced into the curriculum,—could the work be conducted by trained men in a manly way, and in the spirit of investigation rather than of proselytism. I do not think that the results have been valuable from such work as conducted in most of the western colleges which have tried it ; but the causes of failure are obvious."

It is one thing to announce the study of the Bible as a part of a college curriculum ; it is another to furnish instruction of a character which will uplift both the subject studied and the student who studies it. It is one thing to conduct a Sunday-school class ; it is another to teach the Bible as a classic. It is one thing to have college men translate the Greek Testament or the Vulgate ; it is another to teach them the contents, the facts and philosophy of Israelitish literature and history. What is wanted ? Not Sunday-school work ; not the translation of Greek or Latin ; not the dry and perfunctory recital of lists of names and dates, or of the contents of a text-book ; but rather fresh and stimulating investigation, earnest and searching inquiry, work which may properly be called *work*. In how many of the institutions in which the Bible is studied, is such work done ? In some, it is true ; but how small is the number ! In institutions in which poor work, or a wrong kind of work, is being done, it is as essential that for such work there be substituted something different, as that in other institutions Bible-study shall be introduced for the first time.

IT is a matter of interest and significance that, after all, there is such unanimity of opinion among educators regarding this question of college Bible-study. In communications received within sixty days from the representatives of over *two hundred* colleges and schools of higher learning (theological schools not included), there has been expressed but a single sentiment. There can be no more auspicious time for action. With public sentiment so favorable, it only remains for those in authority to take steps to conform to this sentiment. There may be serious difficulties in the way of such work in some institutions ; but these difficulties are in no case insuperable. At all events, an effort may be made to overcome them ; and such an effort will be more likely to prove successful just now when the question is a living one, than later when direct interest has passed away. It is much easier to move *with* the tide.

IT is not exaggeration to dignify the interest and effort now manifested in the matter of college Bible-study as a *movement*. It is a movement for which there have been long years of preparation. It is nevertheless in its infancy. What is its aim ? To lift up the Bible and give it a place in the curriculum of study by the side of the great intellectual productions of all ages. To treat it as a great human

classic, although at the same time acknowledging its divine origin. To disclose its literary and historical riches to minds which have hitherto been in large measure ignorant of their existence. This, therefore, is a *movement*. It must be aided. How can aid be rendered? If you are a college *student*, petition your faculty to make provision for such instruction; when there is demand there will be supply. If you are a college *instructor*, discuss the question in faculty meetings; if objections are urged, answer them, for they will all be found answerable. If you are a college *trustee*, find out why such instruction is not given in your college, and arrange for it. If you are a minister of the gospel, urge the matter in the meetings of your association or presbytery, your synod or conference, write upon the subject for your denominational paper, and present its claims as forcibly as the seriousness of the case demands. If you are a parent, request the authorities of the institution which you desire your son or daughter to attend, to furnish such instruction; and if they do not grant your request, select an institution in which there is afforded an opportunity for such study. If you are a Christian, pray for this movement, that it may grow in force and influence; and for those who give such instruction, that they may receive wisdom from on high.

THE "Inductive Bible-studies" have met with an acceptance more favorable than could possibly have been anticipated. From men in all professions, from students of every class there come words of commendation and favor, which establish beyond peradventure the fact that *something* in this line was needed. Those who are preparing the "studies" appreciate very keenly the deficiencies which characterize them. But in spite of what they lack, thousands of Bible-students are being helped by them. It has been suggested by a few that the "studies" are somewhat *difficult*. This may be true; but it must be remembered (1) that the great aim of this work is to elevate the standard of Bible-study; (2) that the "studies" are prepared for those who desire to *study*; (3) that those who find them to be so *difficult* should recognize the fact that this *is* so simply because of their desperate ignorance of the Bible, an ignorance of which they have not hitherto been conscious.